



MEDIA RELEASE

STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

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DHS ENCOURAGES CHILD CARE PROVIDERS TO HEIGHTEN PROTECTIVE MEASURES WHEN TRANSPORTING CHILDREN

NASHVILLE – Summer is officially here and soon to follow are days of extreme heat that could pose many health risks, especially for children. The Tennessee Department of Human Services is reminding child care providers across the state that are licensed to transport children of the facts and preventative measures to keep children safe when transporting them during summer months.

On an 80-degree day the temperature inside a locked vehicle increases 19 degrees in just 10 minutes; 29 degrees in 20; and 43 degrees in just one hour. For any human being subjected to such extreme temperatures, especially a child, the experience could prove fatal.

A child's body temperature increases 3 to 5 times faster than that of an adult, and children exposed to extreme temperatures can suffer heatstroke, brain damage and death. National statistics show that more than half of all reported exposure deaths involved children under the age of two.

"We know child care providers share our concern for the safety of children in their care during the summer months," said DHS Commissioner Raquel Hatter. "We want to encourage heightened awareness in order to ensure the safety of children and their enjoyment during the summer months. The loss of even one life is unacceptable."

Failing to follow proper procedure can result in the loss of life for a child. DHS licensing staff will be making extra visits to monitor child care agencies during the summer months. Those not adhering to safety requirements will face a range of penalties, from being put on notice, probation, paying civil penalties, to the suspension, or even denial or revocation, of their license.

Anyone witnessing a transportation violation or other child-care violation is urged to call the Child Care Complaint Hotline at 1-800-462-8261, a number that must be posted on all licensed child care buses. More information is available at http://tn.gov/humanserv/adfam/cc_main.html.

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